

CLAIMS:

1. A hand-truck for supporting and transporting a load placed thereon, the hand-truck comprising:
 - a platform;
 - a handle connected to the platform, the handle positionable between a stowed position, a pivotable position and a locked position, wherein the handle is accessible at each position to maneuver the truck.
2. The hand-truck of claim 1, wherein the handle rigidly connects to a first side of the platform while in the locked position.
3. The hand-truck of claim 1, wherein the handle is substantially vertical while in the locked position.
4. The hand-truck of claim 1, wherein the handle slidably connects to the platform while in the stowed position and pivotally connects to the platform while in the pivotal position.
5. The hand-truck of claim 1, and further comprising a channel member for receiving the handle while in the stowed position, the channel member attached to an underside of the platform.
6. The hand-truck of claim 5, and further comprising support members extending from the platform and positioned substantially parallel to the channel member, wherein portions of the support members and the channel member equidistantly extend from the platform.

7. The hand-truck of claim 5, and further comprising:
a hinge connected to the platform cooperably positioned proximate
a proximal end of the channel member, the hinged member
including first and second hinge members; and
wherein the handle comprises:
an elongated portion disposed between the first and second
hinge members and disposable within the channel
member;
handlebars connected to a proximal end of the elongated
portion; and
a cylindrical member protruding from a distal end of the
elongated portion, the cylindrical member engageable
with the hinge, whereupon extracting the handle
from the channel member, the cylindrical member
engages the hinge and the handle is pivotal about the
hinge.
8. The hand-truck of claim 7, and further comprising a locking plate
connected to the platform and wherein the handle further comprises a tongue
member positioned upon the elongated portion, wherein the tongue member extends
from and downwardly parallel to the elongated portion, whereupon positioning the
handle to place the locking plate between the tongue member and the elongated
portion, the handle is rigidly locked to the platform.
9. The hand-truck of claim 1, and further comprising:
a downwardly extended guard member attached to a first end of the
platform; and

wheels connected to the underside of the platform proximate the guard member, wherein the wheels engage the ground when the platform is in a substantially horizontal position, whereupon raising a second end of the platform, the second end opposing the first end, the guard member engages the ground, whereupon further raising of the second end of the platform disengages the wheels from the ground to position the hand-truck in a substantially vertical position supported by the guard member.

10. The hand-truck of claim 9, wherein the handle is accessible proximate the second side of the platform in any position.

11. The hand-truck of claim 9 and further comprising a second downwardly extending guard member attached to the first end of the platform, wherein each wheel disposes within and rotatably connects to the respective guard member.

12. The hand-truck of claim 10 wherein each guard member includes a rectangular box configuration

13. The hand-truck of claim 1 and further comprising a foot-brake connected to the platform, whereupon activating the foot-brake, the hand-truck is frictionally engaged to the ground.

14. A hand-truck comprising:
a platform;
a channel member attached to an underside of the platform;

a locking plate connected to the platform proximate to the channel member;
a hinge connected to the platform proximate the locking plate and the channel member;
a handle connectable to the platform and disposable within the channel member, the handle comprising:
an elongated portion;
handlebars attachable to a proximate end of the elongated portion;
a tongue extending from and downwardly parallel to the elongated portion; and
a stop positioned proximate to a distal end of the elongated portion; and
whereupon extracting the handle from the channel member, the stop engages the hinge and the handle is pivotally positionable between a lowered positioned and a raised position, wherein the handle is lockable to the platform while in the raised position by engaging the tongue member with the locking plate.

15. The hand-truck of claim 14 and further comprising a foot-brake attached to the platform, whereupon engaging the foot-brake the hand-truck fixedly engages the ground.

16. The hand-truck of claim 14, and further comprising:
first and second guard members connected to the underside of the platform;

a wheel disposed within each guard member, wherein the wheels engage the ground when the platform is in a substantially horizontal position, whereupon raising a second end of the platform the guard engages the ground, whereupon further raising of the second end disengages the wheels from the ground and the hand-truck is positionable to a substantially vertical position supported by the guard members.

17. The hand-truck of claim 14 wherein the handlebars are accessible to maneuver the hand-truck when the handle is disposed within the channel member.

18. The hand-truck of claim 14, and further comprising support members extending from the platform and positioned substantially parallel to the channel member, wherein portions of the support members and the channel member equidistantly extend from the platform.

19. The hand-truck of claim 14 wherein the hand-truck is accessible to be lifted by a forklift from any side.

20. A dual-purpose material handling system comprising:
a platform having a plurality of sides for supporting a load placed thereon;
ground engageable wheels attached to the platform; and
a positionable handle connected to the platform, the handle positionable between a locked position and a stowed position, wherein the material handling system is transportable either while engaging the ground or by forklift, whereby the platform is engageable by the forklift from any

side regardless if the handle is in the locked position or the stowed position.

21. The material handling system of claim 20 and further comprising a locking mechanism to lock the handle in the locked position, the locking mechanism comprising:

a locking plate; and

a tongue member, the tongue member engageable with the locking plate, whereupon engaging the tongue member with the locking plate, the handle fixedly secures to the platform and is in the locked position.

22. The material handling system of claim 20 and further comprising a channel member for receiving the handle while in the stowed position, the channel member positioned along an underside of the platform.

23. The material handling system of claim 20 and further comprising a brake attached to an underside of the platform, the brake engageable with the ground, whereby engaging the brake the material handling system frictionally engages the ground to prevent movement of the material handling system.

24. The material handling system of claim 20 wherein the handle is substantially vertical while in the locked position.

25. The material handling system of claim 20 wherein at least two of the wheels are fixed directional wheels, the material handling system further comprising a guard disposed about each fixed directional wheel and attached to the platform, whereby raising an end of the platform opposing an end containing the fixed

directional wheels, the guards engage the ground, whereby further raising of the opposing end of the platform positions the material handling system in a stowed position supported by the guards.

26. The material handling system of 25 wherein the platform is in a substantially vertical position when material handling system is in the stowed position.